(Washington, D.C.) - Congressman Ciro D. Rodriguez (TX-23) announced today the advancement of a comprehensive Defense spending bill that includes needed resources to improve troop readiness, a pay raise for our troops, and upgraded health care for our armed services. Additionally, \$13.16 million in appropriations requests for local projects from San Antonio to El Paso were included. The FY08 Defense Conference report passed by an overwhelming majority this afternoon, 400 to 15.

"As a Member of the House Appropriations Committee, I am proud that we have crafted a bill that can truly improve the quality of life for our brave men and women of the armed services and their families back home," said Congressman Ciro D. Rodriguez. "Our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan have faced the greatest readiness crisis since Vietnam, and this bill provides significant resources for the Department of Defense to remedy this alarming situation. Congress has provided a much needed pay increase so our troops can support their families with dignity, and upgraded health care services for our wounded warriors, retired military, current soldiers, and their families. The President should abandon his partisan veto threat, and join the Congress in prioritizing the wellbeing of our troops by signing this bill into law."

The FY08 Defense bill strengthens America's military by:

- Investing in equipment, training and cutting-edge weaponry, including body armor and vehicles proven to save lives in Iraq;
 - Restoring depleted equipment for the National Guard and Reserves;
 - Funding a larger pay raise (3.5 percent) for our troops than the President requested; and
 - Strengthening health care for our wounded warriors returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.

The following local projects were included in the of FY08 Defense Conference Report passed today:

- \$2.4 million for extension of "Dark Screen" at the Center for Infrastructure Assurance and Security (CIAS) at University of Texas-San Antonio;
- \$1.2 million for the Texas Research Institute for Environmental Studies (TRIES) at Sul Ross State University (SRSU) to expand the Deployable Aerobic Aqueous Bioreactor (DAAB) technology;
- \$1.96 million for the Mobile Optical Tracking System (MOTS), an upgraded road-transportable three-dimensional acquisition and tracking sensor system for missile testing and defense at Ft. Bliss, TX;
- \$2 million for the establishment of the Center for Hetero-Functional Materials (CHM) at the Texas State University System (TSUS);
- \$2 million for Flashlight Soldier-to-Soldier Combat Identification System (FSCIS), a San Antonio research program to develop technology to protect soldiers from friendly-fire;
 - \$2 million for Terra Health Inc. of San Antonio to create a centralized warehousing system

and supply chain for components with Diminishing Manufacturing Sources and Material Shortages (DMSMS);

- \$1.6 million for the Strategic Biofuels Supply Program at Texas A&M Agricultural and Research Extension Center in Pecos, TX.

The FY08 Defense Conference report now goes to the Senate for final approval and then to the President for his signature.

Congressman Rodriguez serves as a Member of the House Committee on Appropriations.

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